

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 SY-05 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00
ACDA-12 /114 W
-----067940 110741Z /16

R 101112Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8249
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 4455

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, IR
SUBJ: DEMONSTRATIONS, VIOLENCE IN IRAN ON MAY 9;
PUBLIC REACTION COMPLEX

REF: A. TEHRAN 4383 (NOTAL), B. TEHRAN 4412 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: DESPITE LULL AFTER EARLY INCIDENTS, VIOLENCE FLARED ON MAY 9 IN SEVERAL IRIANS COTIES, ESPECIALLY QOM, WHERE FIVE WERE KILLED, SEVERAL BANKS AND HOTELS WERE BURNED AND POWER CABLES CUT. IRAN AMERICAN SOCIETY IN ISFAHAN AND RESTAURANT RECEIVED THREATS, AND STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS ACROSS COUNTRY HAVE CLOSED MOST UNIVERSITIES EARLY. IRANIAN VIEWS ON VIOLENCE REMAIN COMPLEX, OFTEN SCHIZOPHRENIC. GOI HAS ANNOUNCED CRACKDOWN. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH REFTELS REPORTED QUIET MAY 9 AFTER EARLY INCIDENTS MAY 8, FURTHER INFORMATION BASED ON MAY 10 PRESS REPORTS AND OTHER SOURCES SHOW DEFINITE UPSURGE OF VIOLENCE. WORST HIT WAS RELIGIOUS CITY OF QOM WHERE,
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ACCORDING TO FARSI (BUT NOT ENGLISH) PRESS, FIVE PEOPLE DIED OF INJURIES RECEIVED IN RIOTING, 300 CARS WERE BURNED, SEVERAL BANKS AND HOTELS WERE ATTACKED AND BURNED, ONE POLICE STATION WAS ATTACKED, MAIN POWER CABLE TO CENTER OF TOWN WAS CUT, AND TEHRAN-KHORRAMSHAR TRAIN WAS STOPPED AT A STATION FOR 90 MINUTES. OTHER SOURCES TELL US SITUATION WAS TOUCH AND GO BEFORE POLICE RESTORED ORDER, AND

THREE FIRE TRUCKS WERE BADLY DAMAGED. PRECISE IDENTITY OF ATTACKERS NOT RPT NOT KNOWN, BUT THEY APPEAR TO HAVE COME FROM MOSQUES WHICH HELD 40TH DAY COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES. GOI HAS ADVISED US VIOLENCE IS CONTINUING MAY 10 WITH AT LEAST ONE DEAD BY 1300 LOCAL TIME.

2. IN SHIRAZ ON MAY 8, PRESS REPORTS 300 PEOPLE POURED OUT OF MOSQUE IN EVENING AND WENT WINDOW-SMASHING. DISTURBANCES AT PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY IN SHIRAZ RESULTED IN ARREST OF 14, MOSTLY STUDENTS, AND BURNING OF STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICES. CONSULATE SHIRAZ REPORTED MORE DISTURBANCES MAY 10, WHEN STUDENTS GROUPS ATTACKED PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY ENGINEERING COLLEGE ABOUT 0900 LOCAL TIME AND BURNED NEARBY CAR. ABOUT ONE HOUR LATER, THERE WAS SIMILAR TROUBLE AT PAHLAVI'S COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN MAIN DORMITORY AREA.

3. PRESS COVERAGE OF RIOTS AT AZARBADEGAN UNIVERSITY IN TABRIZ (REF B) WAS HEAVY. POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES WERE FORCED TO SHOOT INTO MOB, KILLING TWO STUDENTS OUTRIGHT AND INJURING MANY OTHERS. NUMBER OF SECURITY AGENTS AND UNIVERSITY GUARDS WERE ALS SENT TO HOSPITAL. ATTACKS WERE ALSO REPORTED AGAINST BANKS IN AHWAZ, BEHBANDAN, KHORRAMSHAR, KERMANSHAH, BOBOL, YAZD, SHAHABAD.

4. CONSULATE ISFAHAN REPORTS TWO BOMB THREAT CALLS (BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTED SY CHANNEL SEPTTEL), ONE AGAINST IAS AND ONE AGAONST LA FONTAINE RESTAURANT SEVERAL MINUTES BEFORE U.S. ARMY SECRETARY ALEXANDER WAS DUE TO ARRIVE FOR DINNER. NO BOMBS WERE FOUND.

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5. STUDENTS DEMONSTRATIONS IN TEHRAN AND ELSEWHERE HAVE RESULTED IN MOST UNIVERSITIES CLOSING FOR EXAMS ONE TO TWO WEEKS EARLY. SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT TEHRAN UNIVERSITY CALLED FOR BOYCOTT, AND UNIVERSITY LAB AND ARYAMEHR, NATIONAL AND TEHRAN POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITIES IN TEHRAN ARE ALSO CLOSED, ALONG WITH PAHLAVI IN SHIRAZ AND ISFAHAN UNIVERSITY. FOR FIRST TIME, DEMONSTRATIONS IN TEHRAN REACHED DOWN TO NON-POLITICAL TEHRAN COLLEGE OF INSURANCE (TCI), AND ITS OFFSHOOT, REGIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (RDC) INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, WHERE EMBOFFS AND LECTURED PEACEFULLY EARLIER IN WEEK. FOLLOWING RIOT AT TCI, (MAY 9 (FIRST IN SCHOOL'S 10-YEAR HISTORY), WHICH BROKE ALL CORRIDOR AND LIBRARY WINDOWS, REST OF CLASSES WERE CANCELLED. DR. ALI CHEYBANI, JOINT PRESIDENT OF BOTH SCHOOLS, TOLD EMBOFF IN CONFIDENCE HE KNEW SOME OF DEMONSTRATORS, BUT WOULD HANDLE DISCIPLINE INTERNALLY, SINCE HE WITNESSED FOUR OR FIVE RIOT LEADERS ARRIVE FROM ELSEWHERE (HE THOUGH TEHRAN UNIVERSITY OF BAZAAR) BY TAXI WITH BILLY CLUBS TO WHIP UP STUDENT ENTHUSIASM. CHEYBANI SAID ABOUT 10-15 TCI STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED.
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THOUGH THERE WERE NO DEMONSTRATIONS AT RCD, CHEYBANI CLOSED THIS REGIONAL SCHOOL AS WELL TO AVOID POSSIBLE TROUBLE FOR PAKISTANI AND TURKISH STUDENTS IF "OUTSIDE AGITATORS" GOT INVOLVED THERE.

6. RECENT UPROAR IN MAJLES (REF A) AND INITIAL REACTION TO VIOLENCE SURROUNDING MAY 9 POINT UP COMPLEX, AMBIVALENT PUBLIC AND ELITE ATTITUDES DEVELOPING OVER QUESTION OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION AND VIOLENCE IN IRAN, NOT ONLY AMONG MAJLES DEPUTIES BUT AMONG PEOPLE AT EVERY LEVEL. DISSIDENTS, AS WELL AS AT LEAST TWO MAJLES DEPUTIES, HAVE CRITICIZED GOI FOR FAILURE TO STOP BOMBINGS AND BEATING OF INDIVIDUALS. "ESTABLISHMENTARIANS" YELL RIGHT BACK THAT CRITICS OF GOI ARE QUICK TO JUMP ON GOI, BUT SILENT ABOUT VIOLENCE INSTIGATED BY "THEIR OWN" MOBS. THERE IS SIZEABLE MIDDLE-LEVEL (AND MIDDLE CLASS) FEELING THAT GOI OUGHT TO ACT MORE FORCEFULLY TO RESTORE ORDER.

THIS ALSO GENERATES OCCASIONAL VERBAL SWIPES AT EMBOFFS
ALONG LINES OF "SEE WHAT YOUR PRESIDENT'S POLICIES HAVE
BROUGHT US." PITCH TO EMBOFF FROM OTHER SIDE OF FENCE
RUNS SOMETHING LIKE "WHY DOESN'T THE UNITED STATES ACT MORE
FORCEFULLY TO RESTORE HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN, SINCE YOU HAVE SO MUCH
INFLUENCE WITH THE SHAH? OR, "WE HAVE LOST ALL FAITH IN
YOUR PRESIDENT'S PROMISES." IRONIC FEATURE OF ALL THIS
IS ALMOST AUTOMATIC BLAMING OF TROUBLES ON FOREIGN
ELEMENTS, EITHER COMMUNIST OR WESTERN, AND APPEAL TO WESTERNERS,
PARTICULARLY U.S., AS "POINT MAN" ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO
DO SOMETHING. REAL PROBLEM IS, IRANIANS THEMSELVES
DISAGREE ON BOTH CAUSES AND REMEDIES, WITH RESULT THAT
PUBLIC AND ELITE OPINION SEEMS TO BE POLARIZING IN
DIRECTIONS COMPARABLE TO SPLIT IN U.S. DURING LATE 60'S--
EARLY 70'S. PERHAPS BEST ILLUSTRATION OF CURRENT
SCHIZOPHRENIA WAS REMARK BY SEASONED POLITICAL BROKER TO
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EMBOFF MAY 8, WHEN HE DEPLORED GOI EXTRA-LEGAL AND POLICE
ACTIONS AGAINST RELIGIOUS DEMONSTRATORS, BUT IN VERY
NEXT BREATH SAID GOI OUGHT TO "CLAMP DOWN HARD ON THE
COMMUNIST TROUBLEMAKERS IN OUR MIDST."

7. AS IF IN ANSWER TO THESE CRIES, TEHRAN RADIO ANNOUNCED
THIS AFTERNOON, MAY 10, THAT GOI WILL BE LESS PERMISSIVE
THAN IT HAS BEEN IN RECENT PAST AND CRACK DOWN TO APPLY
LAW AND ORDER. WE SHALL SEE WHAT THIS MEANS.

8. MEANWHILE IAS ACADEMIC CENTER IN TEHRAN RECEIVED
BOMB THREAT SAME AFTERNOON WHICH BEING INVESTIGATED AS
OF THIS WRITING. (WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL).
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